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drawn against the authorship of the Marquis de Villars, from the reflections on the queen, would be perhaps still stronger in her case than in his, as the last words of *her* Memoirs are devoted to a grateful recollection of the kindness which the queen had shown her, and to a hope that in the Memoirs of another court, which she was about to write, she would have an opportunity of giving a faithful portraiture "*de cette aimable Reine*"—a promise which, in the two works I have just quoted, and in the others mentioned in the notes, she does not fulfil.*

THE REV. DR. REEVES (for DR. WILLIAM BELL) read the following paper:—

ON THE SO-CALLED RING-MONEY, IN REFERENCE TO MANY SPECIMENS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LONDESBOROUGH, AND MORE ESPECIALLY AN IRISH ONE, WITH A MOVEABLE SWIVEL RING.

"Flexilis obtorti ad digitos et circulus auri."

It will at the present day be superfluous to prove, from the similarity of our British antiquities with those of the continent in religious rites and temples, or from an identical Anglo-Saxon language, and the close resemblance of names for persons and places, as well as from uniformity in customs and usages, that much, nay, possibly all, that the ancient historians of Germany have left us on these topics may be used to illustrate the earliest religion and language, the nomenclature, and the customs of our ancestors. Adam of Bremen, Wittichind of Corvey, Holmald of Bosan, Ditmar of Merseburg, and numerous others, give us glimpses of manners and usages that may be usefully brought to bear upon the imperfect relations of our own annalists; nor is the benefit unreciprocated. Continental writers call largely into requisition the writings of Bede, of Asser, of Nennius, and our Monkish historians, to supply the deficiencies or elucidate obscurities in their own early records. For Englishmen, however, the best use that can be made of foreign historical inquiries is only in so far as they tend in a more or less remote degree to clear up what is forgotten or obscure in our own history; for manners and practices of distant countries that are without relation to British objects, may be feebly neglected or feebly regarded by us.

It is with this view that we take up the subject of those curious articles frequently found in the British empire, and commonly, and possibly in part rightly, known under the name of RING MONEY, to

en Europe, depuis 1672 jusqu'en 1579," alluded to by Mr. Planché in the introduction to his translation of Madame d'Aulnoy's *Fairy Tales* (London, 1858). It contains no preface; but Madame d'Aulnoy (or D'Anoy, as she is called), is incidentally mentioned at p. 118, part 2.

* "*Mémoires de la Cour d'Espagne* (by Madame d'Aulnoy). A la Haye, 1692. *Seconde partie*, p. 212."

prove by foreign usages and historical evidence the real and principal nature of these enigmatical objects; and which one more curious, and possibly unique, in the valuable collection of the Earl of Londesborough, will incontestibly prove.

The subject is not, however, without danger, as we must not only run counter to preconceived opinions, but it is difficult to bring minds fully occupied with a prior theory to pay attention to citations and proofs from distant, and possibly to them, unknown authorities, which bring only fragmentary and widely dispersed evidence. It has been well observed by a writer on German mythology, in Part xxi. of the Journal of the "*Verein für Alterthumskunde im Reinlande* (Association for the Knowledge of the Archæology of the Rhine Countries) that its specialities have to be collected, and an entirety to be constructed anew from very disjointed and distant fragments; and he adds the exemplification of another writer on the same topic: one place will give us Thor's hammer, and another, possibly, its curious feature of hitting every object at which it is aimed; whilst a third locality, perhaps a hundred miles distant, will adduce its property of always returning (like the Australian boomerang) to the powerful hand from which it was hurled. This may excuse and apologize for referring in our proposed inquiry to old continental practices and writers; and it is only from, as I trust, the successful results, that something of prolixity may be justified.

Before, however, proceeding farther, it may be necessary to advert to the prevalent belief that these objects were used as fibulæ to fasten the garments of their owners—a purpose, certainly, for which, from their form, they are very ill adapted: we must suppose, for such intent, that the two projecting lips were inserted in two holes of a heavy toga or outer covering of skins; but in that case the prominent semicircular head must have pressed so forcibly against the breast, and dug itself so deeply in the flesh of the wearer, that the pain must have been insupportable; if inverted, and the bend brought outwards, it would have been often an inconvenient obstacle to the use of the arm or the bend of the neck. We have in Montfaucon some examples of Druidical costume, and in various authors references to their habits and dress, but in none is there the slightest allusion to such a use; and as the articles were, from their material, evidently only in use by the higher classes, such neglect does not appear probable, had this use obtained.*

If we consider the radical meaning of the RING as a symbol, we shall find, without having recourse to the idea of Adelung (*s. v.*), that the final *g* is merely a superfluous suffixus, and that consequently the word contains the idea of purity, from *rin* (to run as a brook), and *rein* (clean); or that our old Saxon *rinse*, and still better *wring*, or Anglo-Saxon

* We believe the entirety of the exhumations of tumuli in this and every other country, though rich in fibulæ and personal ornaments, may be challenged for the production of a single object of this description. My own extended observations have never yet met with an instance; but, at all events, never on skeletons in the necessary position of this ornament.

Hring, with only a variation of the initial guttural, will give the same idea of purity, by transfer of the subjective to its objective consequence ; for, though the idea of purity, and consequently of sanctity and truth, be not inherent in our present use of the word *ring*, yet its earliest use as the symbol in acts where purity is especially implied, in the marriage ceremony, proves its ancient acceptance amongst us in this meaning.

Rings were originally, no doubt, an entire circle. The easy fabrication of a circle, and their Greek and Latin denominations, *circulus* or *κυκλος*, prove this evidently ; but the Latin synonyms for *orbis terrarum*, as *mundus*, which also signifies clean, give us again the primitive meaning of the Saxon *ring* for purity. It is therefore in accordance, that, though we find no classical use of the ring in the marriage ceremonies of either Greeks or Romans, we find it in their usages where faith and truth are implied ; in their compacts and agreements of amity and peace. This usage derives from the earliest periods of history ; but the Greeks and Romans may have derived the practice more immediately from the East and Persia, where existing monuments sufficiently evince its frequent and solemn use. In the numerous engravings with which Sir R. Ker Porter has illustrated his Persian travels, the examples are frequent.

In vol. i., at page 571, plate 27, we have two examples at Nakshirajab, in which the sacred girdle or guebre belt adds force to the adjuration of the ring, the girdle being, no doubt, the antitype of the Catholic stole, the imposition of which on the joined hands is a portion of the sacramental rite of marriage in that religion.

At page 548 is the representation of a large rock sculpture at Nakshi Roustam: two sovereigns on horseback hold a ring conjointly in each right hand, over a battle-field, as evinced by the corpses beneath their horses' feet : an early example of a *belle alliance* or more modern *enteinte cordiale*.

At page 520 are two standing figures, with rings and concomitants, which would require a long dissertation, and repay the labour, at a more fitting opportunity. A priest of Mithras is emphatically blessing the act with joined hands.

In plate 40 we have a procession following the sacred bull, and in the tier next below we have a person bearing perhaps the monarch's sword, and after him follows another, bearing two rings in his hand, the exact prototypes of a very heavy golden one, dug up in Bornholm, and now in the Royal Museum at Copenhagen ; but this latter is too narrow to encircle any portion of the human body, is without the lips, and only a thick solid bar of the valuable metal turned over at both ends so as to be capable of being grasped only by the closed fist in the act of adjuration or abjuration.

As we are at present not writing a history of these rings, but only of their uses, it may be unnecessary to prove that they are found both annular and penannular in *iron* strongly oxidized, in *bronze* finely patinated, in *silver* more rarely, but frequently in *gold*, and of great weight.

Their sanctity will detain us longer. We find them almost universally as an ornament and sacred utensil of the Northern Germanic and Scandinavian temples, for the purpose of administering oaths or receiving the prayers of the votaries. For this reason Hauptmann von Ledebur, in his account of the Royal Museum of Fatherland antiquities at Berlin, describing the valuable ring found at *Stabelwitz* in Silesia, adopts justly the opinion of Professor Büsching, in calling them *Schwurringe*, rings of adjuration. This example is possibly the heaviest and most valuable of its kind yet discovered, weighing 227 ducats of the purest 24 carats gold: it is oval in form, and its interior diameter $3\frac{1}{8}$ " to $2\frac{1}{2}$ ", wide enough to introduce the hand and get it over the wrist, but with no signs of ever having been so worn, which, by the softness of the metal, must have been evident, had it ever been so used: it is, however, certain, that it could never have been used as a fibula, for, though the ends are beautifully chased into lion and dragon heads, whose manes form an elegant ornament some way down the back, they are not sufficiently prominent to bear the weight of a garment as a button, nor is the interval or opening betwixt the two figure-heads sufficient to admit conveniently any kind of web or cloth to have served as a covering. Von Ledebur farther remarks (p. 51), similar gold rings, although not equal to this in weight, have been often found in Denmark and Sweden, and are now preserved in the royal collections at Copenhagen and Stockholm.

For the frequency of these sacred emblems, in Iceland and the north, we quote from "Mallet's Northern Antiquities" (p. 291):—"The Thingstead was always near the temple, in which one of the sacerdotal magistrates performed a sacrifice, and sprinkled the walls of the edifice, as well as the bystanders, with the blood of the victims: *holding in his hand, on this as on every other solemn occasion, a massive silver ring, with which the altar of every temple was furnished.*" The ring in the hand of a priest was the symbol of sacrifice, as in those of the laity a sign of truth, just as at the present day oaths are taken on the Testament, which serves in the pulpit for public supplication and prayer.

Wheaton, in his "History of the Northmen" (p. 32), is more specific on the subject of their attesting sanctity in Iceland:—

"Thorolf landed where the columns of the temple of the god Thor, when thrown into the sea, came to land, and took formal possession of that part of the coast in the ancient accustomed manner, by walking with a burning firebrand in his hand round the lands he intended to occupy, and marking the boundaries by setting fire to the grass. He then built a large dwelling-house on the shores of what was afterwards called the Hofs-vag, or Temple Bay, and erected a spacious temple to Thor, having an entrance door on each side, and towards the inner end were erected the sacred columns of the former temple (in Norway), in which the *reginalar*, or the nails of the divinity, were fixed. *Within these columns was a sanctuary, in which he placed a silver ring, two ounces in weight, which was used in the ministration of every solemn oath, and adorned the person of the pontiff chieftain in every public assembly,*

the oath was—So help me Freyr, Njord, and the Almighty As: a formula found both in the ‘Eyrbyggja Saga,’ cap. ii., and in the ‘Laudnama-Bok,’ p. 300.”

It is a somewhat earlier period of our own history which gives us confirmation of this method of swearing, and its solemnity as well as inviolability. Most nations have esteemed one mode of adjuration more binding and more sacredly restrictive than the rest. The Roman Styx is too well known to need much illustration, as the imprecation which the gods themselves could not break with impunity: as,

“Adjuro Stygii caput implacabile fontes;”

VIRGIL, *Æn.* xii., 186;

and also,

“Di cujus jurare timent et fallere numen.”

But water in general, or chalybeate springs, seem sometimes to have the same inviolable virtue, as in Eumenius, “Panegy., Constant.,” c. xxi.:—“Jam omnia te vocare ad se templa videntur præcipueque Apollo, cujus ferventibus aquis, perjuria puniuntur quæ te maxime oportet odisse.”

The oath of Odin in the Orkneys, when broken in the case of a seduced female, was punished with increased severity by the elders of a Scotch presbytery, even in the last century; but the most characteristic and most sacred oath of the hot-headed and ever-armed Highlander was by *his dirk*, for the elucidation of which we must refer to Sir W. Scott’s own note on the subject, in the 8vo. edition of “Waverley” (note 2 N, p. 153).

The passage referred to from our own history on this topic is an interesting event in the life of our great Alfred, as related by Asser, Giles’ translation (p. 58)—“Also they (the Danes) swore an oath over the Christian relics which, with King Alfred, were next in veneration after the Deity himself.” But Asser is rightly corrected by the Saxon Chronicle of the year 876; though these piratical invaders seem to have despised even the most solemn obligation of their own temples:—

“And in this same year the army of the Danes in England swore oaths to King Alfred *upon the holy ring*, which before they would not do to any nation; and they delivered to the king hostages from among the most distinguished men of the army, that they would speedily depart from his kingdom. And notwithstanding this, that part of the army which was horsed stole away by night from the fortress to Exeter.”

For the *frequency* of these rings in temples we may instance, amongst many other discoveries of them about Druidical circles or cromlechs, the large number of twenty-five exhumed from beneath one of the monolithic pillars of the great Temple of Carnac, in Brittany, which were engraven and offered for sale throughout Europe about five years since.

But that the practice of ring swearing was not altogether foreign to our own island, the oath to Odin, already adduced, seems to prove; and the following passage from the “Gloucester Book of the Brit. Archæolog. Association,” p. 62, will render it indisputable:—

“ St. Bega was the patroness of St. Bee’s, in Cumberland, *where she left a holy bracelet*, which was long an object of profound veneration : a small collection of her miracles, written in the 12th century, is extant, and has been published.” In the prefatory statement of the compiler, we learn, among other things, that—“ *Whosoever forswore himself upon her bracelet swiftly incurred the heaviest punishment of perjury, or a speedy death.*”

Upon this passage we may observe, that as the Anglo-Saxon *Beagas*, the French *Bague*, is the usual denomination of our Saxon ancestors for rings, we may venture to predict that holy St. Bega was but a personification of one of the holy rings, which, having gained great hold on the minds of the heathen Cumbrians, it was not politic in their first Christian missionaries wholly to subvert ; the Papal policy sought to divert the popular veneration to its own benefit by the improvisation of a new saint, and the onomatopœia of the ancient venerated emblem, as in the other instances, by which St. Veronica and St. Longinus were transferred as veritable personages to the Papal calendar from the sudarium, and the spear by which the body of the Saviour was pierced on the cross.

With inscriptions we have only, as oath rings, a single one, but graven with an important word ; it was found in Bavaria, and described with an engraving in vol. i. of the “ Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Bavarian Academy ;” the letters, in old German characters, form the obsolete German word

Œwrokt,

which has the same meaning almost as the obsolete English *wroke* and *wroken*, from the verb to *wreak*, viz., to imprecate revenge or vengeance ; so in the Bremen low Saxon dictionary—“ *Wraken wreken*, rächen ; Cod. Argent. *wriken*, ad. *wrozan*, Holl. *wraecken*, Altfräuk. *wrerecho*.” It is further remarked :—“ This word is allied to the preceding *wraken* ; to throw out (Baltic merchants know well the meaning of wracked or bracked deals and timber), because the avenger throws out from him and persecutes the perjurer.”

There is, however, still remaining another possibly unique specimen of these rings in the possession of the Earl of Londesborough, found in Ireland, which deserves special attention, as elucidating the magisterial uses of these rings, and a curious passage in Scotch judicial practice, which seems hitherto to have escaped inquiry, and of which I can find no trace but in the curious pages of our Northern Wizard, comes to our aid, and we trust also by it to explain to Teutonic inquirers a passage in their own mythology which they appear to have hitherto misunderstood.

This ring, as far as a cursory view amongst an assemblage of objects of the highest archæological interest, and through a glass case, enabled me to note, is of silver, almost annular, and with the usual lips ; but the peculiarity consists of a *moveable swivel ring*, which can be *slided round the circle*, but not taken off the ring, from the obstruction of these protruding lips.

The chronicler Ditmar, Bishop of Merseburg, about the year 1010, has the following passage (Pertz, vol. iii., lib. iii., p. 858):—

“Non est admirandum quod in hiis partibus tale ostentatur prodigium (a portentous noise) nam traditores illi raro ad ecclesiam venientes de suorum visitatione custodum nil curant. Domesticos colunt Deos, multumque sibi prodesse eosdem sperantes, hiis immolant. *Audivi de quodam baculo in cujus summitate manus erat unum in se ferreum ferens circulum* quod cum pastore illius villæ in quo is fuerat per omnes domos has singulariter ductus, in primo introitu a portitore suo sic salutaretur ‘*Vigila, Hinnil, Vigila,*’ sic enim rustica vocabatur lingua, et epulantes ibi delicate de ejusdem se tueri custodia stulti autumabant, ignorantes illud Daviticum : simulacra gentium opera hominum, &c.”

The Latinity of the good Bishop is universally given up, and we know not whether it be owing to the obscurity of his language, or to the imperfection of the verbal report he had received, that his commentators are completely at fault on the passage. Ursinus and Wedekind (p. 242, note), seem to think that *Henil* in the passage has been generally but erroneously taken for a household deity—“*Nomine Hennil non Penates intellexerunt;*” whilst Jacob Grimm (in “*Deutsche Mythologie,*” 2ter Ausgabe, p. 710), contrary to his usual wont, hesitates in his deduction from a Bohemian word and practice to bring it in conformity with the morning dawn, and construes the three words—“*aurora est (erumpet) Vigila, Vigila.*” Yet he had before him, in the following note quoted from Wedekind, probably the true explanation—“*Ego vero longe aliam rem, sub hoc baculi citu, arbitror latere, ut scilicet genius rusticorum illius ætatis tulit. Baculus iste, ut ego quidem reor, signum erat quod pro convocanda concione pagana ostiatim mittebant.* Nomine *Henil* non Penates sed quilibet proximum sibi vicinum allocutus est familiariter ut excubiarum vigiliarumque vices in pago servaret; hinc acclamatio ‘*Vigila! Hennil Vigila!*’ (auf die wache! nachbar! auf die wache!) conservant passim consuetudinem hanc incolæ pagorum nostrorum ad hunc usque diem, *ut quando prætor paganus convocare velit, hastam vel baculum vel malleum ostiatim mittat, quo incola vicini cujusque fores pulsat donec ex ultimi manu ad prætorem redeat.* In quibusdam pagis ad concionem convocandum ex ordine in unum annum eligitur paganus quem vocant *Heimbürgen.* Ditmari ætate illud convocationis symbolum pastori pecoris tuendum tradebant.”

Had Ursinus, the writer of this note, extended the sign and scene of convocation from a town or village to a hundred or county, he would have described exactly the practice so well established for Scotland in sending round *the fiery cross* (to which we shall again revert), after finding there conformities in judicial practices explained by Lord Londesborough’s Irish ring, a combination of dispersed localities, which the authority mentioned at the commencement of the paper explains and justifies.

In the Cymrogea of the learned Icelander, Arngrim Jonas, (p. 71), we have the same intimation for his native island, and an indigenous name for the staff that has much verbal conformity, and a satisfactory expla-

nation in our native tongue; he says:—"Conventus vero habendi, *crux lignea* signum erat, post annum certe millesimum, quum jam in fidem Christianam jurassent antea fortasse *cestra vel malleus Jovis* (Thor's hammer) pro ejus temporis religione;" and in the periodical from which I borrow this quotation ("Balt. Stud," vol. x., part ii., p. 23), it is added—"Die Isländer brauchen als *Budstikke* ein Stück Holz, das, wie ein Axt geformt ist, nach alter Sitte." (The Icelanders use as their *Biddingstick* a piece of wood in the form of an axe (hammer) according to ancient custom,

That I have translated *Budstikke* in this passage into Bidding stick, will not appear forced to those who have heard of the bidding weddings of Wales or the North; or who in Hamburg have witnessed the calls of a guild of operatives, joiners, masons, &c., to attend the funeral of a deceased fellow-labourer by a *Ver-bitter* with a short black staff entwined with a white fillet and surmounted by a lemon, as the emblem of his melancholy office.

There are variations in this name, as *Budkafte*, *Budlafa*;—but the latter alters the idea merely by the introduction of dispatch—by the Yorkshire *loup* to run, and the German *laufen*; as also in the north, when a traveller wished to avoid the delays usual at the post stations, a *lauf zettel* was forwarded before him from place to place, to have relays in readiness. *Budkafte* may be a modification of the symbol sent round; which, from the analogy of other magisterial or potential commands, may frequently have been a *ring* or staff. These were often the symbols of the most important acts—"Et illuc venit Dux Thassilo et reddit ei (Carolo magno) ipsam patriam cum *baculo* in cujus similitudo hominis (Pertz, i., 43, l. c.); and, "Conradus rex—curtem per investituram *baculi imperialis* tradit ipsumque baculum in testimonio reliquit" (Lang. Reg. 1, 76, anno 1076).

But in a collection on Lithuanian history, compiled by a body of learned Jesuits, we have a very full and complete explication of this emblem in connexion with the high dignity of the royal pontiffs of heathen Prussia, the Krive Krivesto (Pontifex Pontificorum), and the subordinate degrees of this regulated priesthood, on which latter I refer to my "Shakspeare's Puck and his Folkslore" (pp. 267, 317, 326):—

"Postea (Krive) floruit in ducatu tantum Samogitiæ usque ad extremum tempus conversionis, scilicet ad annum 1414 Mens. Jul. 28, qua mortuus est in Villa Onkain ultimus Krive Krivesto nomine Gutowntus numero lxxiv. flamen. Cum eo verum extincta est dignitas, magni olim ponderis, in rebus sacris juditariusque per totam terram Lethovicam, Semigalliam, Livoniam, Lithuaniam, Samogithiam, Curoniam, Sanigalliam, Livoniam, Lethigalliam necnon Kreviciensium Russorum: qua in declinio xi. sæculi incipit sensim deperire: denique tenebræ eviternæ paganismi fugientes se de terra in terram dissipatæ sunt ante faciem Christianæ fidei et crucis sanctæ."

We have here also the forms of the *Bajulus Symbolum Jurisdictionis* of this Krive and his subordinates, which the writer says, "vulgo sermone *Bathiuckas* nuncupatus."

These symbols are merely intensive, from the simplest for the third degree of the priesthood, to the Waidelot, which, for the Ewarte and Krive, was duplicated and triplicated, and therefore it will be sufficient to give the description of the lowest.

"Symbolum jurisdictionis communi sacerdotis jusjudicandi habentis, Waidelote vel alii id generis, vulgari sermone *Buthus* nuncupatis, talem habuit formam.

"Baculus longiusculus ligno simplici querci supra quem est una virga curvata in modum nodi paululo inclinatæ rursumque junctione una bursa pendet; sed et sigilla eorum portabunt talia symbola ut ait chronista Ruthenus."

We have before remarked that the next stage in the priesthood had this symbol doubled, and the third or highest had it trebled; and from it the pontiffs of Rome may have taken their hint of a symbol for their threefold claim of power over hell, on earth, and in heaven, in the papal tiara.

In the imperfect drawing, however, of this heathen symbol we may readily find in the top bend the penannular Irish ring; and not improbably in the lines and bends surmounting it, the imperfect rudiments of a moveable swivel, to bring it into perfect conformity with the principal object of our inquiry.

Had Von Ledebur, in his above-quoted work, given a drawing of the following enigmatical (räthselhaft) object, described at p. 32, we might possibly have found the swivel in an evidently heathen magisterial symbol, dug up from beneath a tumulus near Schwerin in Mecklenburg, and *in an urn!*

"It exhibits the upper portion of a buckle (bügel), an inch broad, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the head, which on the under surface is flat, but on its upper is ornamented with lines and rings. In its centre is a four-sided pyramid, with one step, and *in its upper portion a hand ring or catch (griff) moves freely* Its bronze material, incrustated with a beautiful ærugo nobilis, is finely worked, and glitters on some places, where worn by friction, like gold."

It is to this moveable portion of the emblem that we particularly direct attention, as, from whatever cause or concatenation of ideas, judicial importance attaches to a moveable ring in Scottish jurisprudence. It is solely to the antiquarian knowledge of the great Scotch novelist, in "*The Antiquary*" (8vo edit., 1846, Part i., p. 476, cap. xi.), that I owe my knowledge of this fact; for my search elsewhere in books has been fruitless, and I have no personal legal friends in the north from whom to make inquiries.

The transaction refers to an execution put into Wardour Castle, and the resistance offered to the officer by the hot-headed zeal of the Highland soldier, M'Intyre:—

"The legal officer confronted him of the military; grasped with one doubtful hand the greasy bludgeon which was to enforce his authority, and with the other produced his short official baton, tipped with silver,

and having a *moveable ring* upon it. 'Captain M'Intyre—Sir,—I have no quarrel with you; but if you interrupt me in my duty, I will break the wand of peace, and declare myself deforced.'

"'And who the devil cares,' said Hector, totally ignorant of the words of judicial action, 'whether you declare yourself divorced or married; and as to breaking your wand, or breaking the peace, or whatever you call it, all I know is, that I will break your bones if you prevent the lad from harnessing the horses, to obey his mistress's orders.'——'I will take all who stand here to witness,' said the messenger, 'that I showed him my blazon, and explained my character. He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar'—and he slid the enigmatical ring from one end of the baton to the other, being the appropriate symbol of his having been forcibly interrupted in the discharge of his duty."

"Honest Hector, better accustomed to the armoury of the field than that of the law, saw this mystical ceremony with great indifference, and with the like unconcern beheld the messenger sit down to write out an execution of deforcement. But at the moment, to prevent the well-meaning honest Highlander from running the risk of a severe penalty, the antiquary arrived, puffing and blowing, with his handkerchief crammed under his hat, and his wig upon the end of a stick.

"'What the deuce is the matter here?' he exclaimed, hastily adjusting his head-gear—'I have been following you in fear of finding your idle loggerhead knocked against one rock or other.'——'I think you would not have me stand quietly by and see a scoundrel like this, because he calls himself a king's messenger, forsooth (I hope the king has many better for his meanest errands), insult a young lady of family and fashion, like Miss Wardour?' 'Rightly argued, Hector,' said the antiquary; 'but the king, like other people, has now and then shabby errands, and, in your ear, must have shabby fellows to do them. But even supposing you unacquainted with the statutes of William the Lion, in which, *capite quarto versu quinto*, this crime of deforcement is termed *despectus Domini Regis*, a contempt, to wit, of the king himself, in whose name all legal diligence issues—could you not have inferred, from the information I took so much pains to give you to-day, that those who interrupt officers, who come to execute letters of caption, are *tanquam participes criminis rebellionis*? seeing that he who aids a rebel is himself *quodammodo* an accessory to rebellion."

The extract is long, but the words are those of Sir Walter Scott, and the entire citation was necessary to elucidate the practice, since, contrary to the author's usual wont, when Scotch customs require elucidation for the English reader, this, one of the most curious, is left without explanation, though it is termed enigmatical and mystical; it would have been a great boon to southern readers to have known how Scott found "the symbol *appropriate*."

The result of our inquiries hitherto may, we think, be fairly stated—that rings were heathen symbols of great veneration and general juridical use in the possession of the priests of our own and foreign heathen

temples; that from the close verbal conformity of the Anglo-Saxon beaga (ring), and the Latin baculum (a staff), the two objects might easily be confounded; and that convenience and centuries may have imperceptibly wrought the change; both the heathen ring and the Scotch baton may have had moveable swivel rings by which to attach criminals. The Irish ring of Lord Londesborough would then be explainable, partly from the Icelandic rings, and partly from the Scotch "enigmatical symbol," and the combination of both would be mutually corroborative.

Their use as ministering sanctity to oaths would be only one of the purposes to which they might be applied; but the penannular form and lipped ends fit those of such shape more especially for administering an oath by the priest or Krive. Held in his hand, the party taking the oath would lay a finger from each hand, or his palms, upon the flattened ends, whilst calling the Deity to witness the truth of his affirmation. Exposing the palms of the hand was in all ages appropriate in addresses to the Deity: the classics abound in such proofs:—

"Tendit duplices ad sidera palmas—
Geminas tollit ad astra manus,—
Digitis intendit mollibus arcum."

And from this touching seems to have originated the custom of a *corporal oath*; as before the Reformation oaths were taken on the reliques of saints—*super corpora sanctorum*, as is witnessed in the relation of Harold's oath to William of Normandy. Even subsequently, in the rath-strike of the old town of Lüneburg, oaths are still administered by the venerable fathers of its senate upon a popish reliquary, the bones having been removed from it.

It may also be noticed that one of these Irish rings, late in the possession of Mr. C. Croker, and figured by him in Smith's "Collectanea Antiqua," seems to have flanges broad enough for the full palm to rest on; so in Wilde's "Catalogue," Figs. 591, 592, 593.

Different and distant countries may have varied the manner of administering oaths. What we have hitherto seen supposes them given in a set formula by the priest holding the sacred symbol in his own hand for the imposition on it of the palms or fingers of him by whom the oath was taken. This view may be justified by the method of swearing fealty to a suzerain lord, which was by the vassal placing the fist of his lord in his two hands, and so vowing fidelity and homage. The fist of the lord here replaced the heathen ring, as, no doubt, the ancient ceremony is more adapted to Christian practice. But in some places the practice may have been to give the symbol into the hands of him who swore, and this method is reduced in our modern courts to delivering the Testament to be held by the witness. Rings without lips or flanges, and which are only capable of being held by the fingers doubled on the palm, may have been used for such variation of the ceremony, as one exists at Copenhagen, dug up in the island of Bornholm, formed merely by doubling both ends of a massive circular bar of the purest

gold, and in weight five pounds, which could have served no other purpose. It is also curious in another respect, having a thin gold wire of equal purity twisted round it, evidently with the intention of bringing the object to a certain weight and value; *ad certum pondus*, is Cæsar's expression when speaking of the monetary use of iron rings in Britain; and that these rings of valuable metal and ready distribution, might not have served like any other costly chattel, immediately at hand, as a reward or payment, may easily be admitted; but only occasionally and by no means as what their usual designation of *ring money* might imply, the current coin of a country; we seem to have taken this name and idea from the quantities of bronze objects in this form which are now so largely imported into Africa from Liverpool, as a species of currency, of which the late Sir John Tobin was the principal exporter, and is now succeeded by Mr. Charles Stuart, who informed me, in an accidental meeting at a table d'hôte at Münster, that his possession of the receipt for the peculiar combination of the metals was a valuable legacy from Sir John, which gave him nearly the monopoly of the African trade, and of the importation of palm oil into this country, to the extent of ten thousand tons annually. The swarthy negroes of the Gambia and Senegal reject all such rings as do not conform to his receipt, by some peculiar analysis, which it might be curious and beneficial to any one to investigate.

To the antiquary it might be more curious and interesting to know why these savages still insist upon the peculiar form of the Anglo-Saxon beaga, which, to European ideas, seems very inconsistent with commercial utility or convenience. In my 'Shakspeare's Puck and his Folk-lore' (London, 1852, 8vo., p. 238), I have traced the only religious idea or emblem which those Africans, that do not profess Mahommedan tenets, hold sacred, viz., their *Fetisch*, to a western word, and a connexion with our legends of Robin Goodfellow, Puck, &c.; and it may, therefore, have been by some equally circuitous route that the form and shape of this ring money may have penetrated where but few Europeans have forced their way. Sir William Beetham tells us ring money in this form has been found in Italy; and he exhibited at the Archæological Institute, July 17, 1848, two specimens found respectively at Chiusi and Perugia; these may have been the first stepping-stones of their route into Africa.

In a country where the mind is stagnant, and progress precluded by ignorance and barbarism, the prestige of sanctity once established would remain unaltered for ages; and our country receives at present possibly greater material benefit from this sanctity in the manufacture of the article, than our ancestors from its use.

As an example that these rings, when of the precious metals, might have frequently, like modern snuff-boxes, pins, &c., been dispensed by princes as rewards, we will give an example of other valuable moveables being thus disposed of from Giesebrechts, "Geschichte der Wenden," "Hist. of the Wends," vol. i., p. 218: — "Einar took opportunity to tell

Harold he would not remain longer with Jarl Hakon, who valued gold more than Skalds and their praises; he would rather go over to Signaldi, if he would receive him. But Einar suffered himself to be persuaded, when he got a present of a golden pair of scales with two weights, one of gold, the other of silver (which were also magical dies) which revealed the future. From this circumstance, Skald Einar got the surname of *Skalagtam* (Scale King)."

We have before said that Christianity introduced the *cross* in lieu of the ring, for summoning the clans; and fitness and its greater readiness of being seen at a distance rendered this cross *fiery*. In the following beautiful lines from Scott's "Lady of the Lake," the knowledge of this custom is rendered immortal for his country; but before I give them, permit me to make a remark on the emphatical introduction of the goat into the custom and sacrifice, as it may show the poet's great knowledge of the practice even abroad, and give German mythologists a better interpretation of Ditmar of Merseburg's enigmatical *Henil* than has yet appeared. I must again refer to my "Shakespeare's Puck," where at p. 239 is the mythical figure of a fawn, and the following pages explanatory of it and kid bearing in general; it is there remarked that kid in our language means both the young of the goat and a faggot or bundle of sticks; now, the Latin *hinnulus* for kid is merely a prosopopœia of the natural bleating of the young animal, and may therefore have been as easily received by one nation as another, for its designation; it would be merely requisite to supply the other sense of baculus in the northern tongue; at all events, the oldest Teutonic word for a sheep is *hammel*, and many instances may be adduced from all languages of the indiscriminate use of the letters *m* and *n*. Adelung, on the letter *n*, gives various examples of the change; and hammer, Thor's Hamar, which Adelung (s. v.) deduces from the same root as differing (objective and subjective) views of mutilation, has both a verbal and national connexion, and would give the Icelandic axe, which was sent round for their gatherings, as my extract from Arngrim Jonas proves; so that *Vigila! Henil, Vigila!* interpreted by modern practice, would mean, *Awake, there is the fiery cross to bear! awake!* But I will no longer detain my readers from the beautiful lines of Scott, as a compensation for the possibly dry details of the preceding pages:—

VIII.

"'Twas all prepared, and from the rock
A goat, the parent of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierc'd by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide
Down clotted beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glaz'd his eye-balls dim.
The grisly priest, with murmur'd prayer,
A slender *crosslet* form'd with care,

A cubit's length in measure due,
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Caillach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan Alpin's grave,
And answering Lomond's breezy deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The cross thus form'd he held on high
With wasted hand and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings
 woke
While his anathema he spoke.

IX.

" 'Woe to the clansman who shall view
 This symbol of sepulchral yew,
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
 On Alpine dwelling low.
 Deserter of his chieftain's trust,
 He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
 But from his sires and kinsmen thrust,
 Each clansman's execration just
 Shall doom him wrath and woe.'
 He paus'd : the word the vassals took
 With forward step and fiery look ;
 On high their naked brands they shook,
 Their clattering targets wildly strook,
 And first in murmurs low,
 Then, like the billow on his course,
 That far to seaward finds its source,
 And flings to shore its muster'd force,
 Burst with loud roar their murmurs
 hoarse
 ' Woe to the traitor, woe !'
 Benan's grey scalp the accents knew :
 The joyous wolf from cover drew,
 Th' exulting eagle scream'd afar—
 They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

XI.

" Then deeper paus'd the priest anew,
 And hard his lab'ring breath he drew,
 While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
 And eyes that glow like fiery brand,
 He meditated curse more dread,
 And deadlier on the clansman's head,
 Who, summon'd to his chieftain's aid,
 The signal saw, and disobey'd.
 The crosslet's points of sparkling wood
 He quench'd among the bubbling blood ;

And as again the sign he rear'd

Hollow his curse and voice was heard.
 ' When fits this cross from man to man,
 Vich Alpine's summons to his clan,
 Burst be the ear that fails to heed,
 Palsied the foot that shuns to speed,
 May ravens tear the careless eyes,
 Wolves make the coward heart their
 prize.
 As sinks that blood stream in the earth,
 So may his heart's blood drench his
 hearth ;
 As dies in hissing gore this spark,
 Quench so his light, destruction dark ;
 And be the grace to him denied
 Brought by this sign to all beside.'
 He ceas'd ; no echo gave again
 The murmur of that deep amun.
 Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
 In arms the huts and hamlets rise ;
 From winding glen, from upland brown,
 They pour'd each hardy tenant down ;
 Nor slack'd the messenger his pace—
 He show'd the sign, he nam'd the place,
 And, pressing forward like the wind,
 Left clamour and surprise behind.
 The fisherman forsook the strand,
 The swarthy smith took dirk and brand ;
 With changed cheer the mower blithe
 Left in the half-cut swathe his scythe ;
 The herds without a keeper staid,
 The plough was in mid furrow laid ;
 The falc'ner toss'd his hawk away,
 The hunter left the stag at bay ;
 Prompt at the signal of alarms,
 Each son of Alpine rush'd to arms.
 So swept the tumult and affray
 Along the margin of Achray."

These beautiful lines give us a view, in vivid language, how these *rings* were transmitted as the emblem of the supreme Priest and his warrant ; this was not restricted to a staff or any particular badge. We learn, in a curious passage of Peter of Dusburg, an early contemporary chronicler of the conflict of the Teutonic knights with the ancient Wends of heathen Prussia, that this symbol might be a staff or any other *known sign* sent round by the Krive to his subjects ; and what so known as the ring always kept in the temple ?

" Fuit in media nationis hujus perversæ, scilicet in Nadrovia, locus quidem dictus Romove in quo habitabat quidem dictus Crive quem colebant pro papa, quia sicut dominus papa regit universalem ecclesiam fidelium ita istius nutum seu mandatum non solum gentis prædictæ sed Lithowini et aliæ nationes Livoniæ terræ regebantur. Tantæ fuit auctoritatis quod non solum ipse vel aliquis de sanguine suo verum *et nun-*

cuius cum baculo suo vel alio signo noto transiens terminos infidelium prædictorum a regibus et nobilibus et communi populo in magna reverentia habebatur."

Voigt, in his history of ancient Prussia, gives a somewhat varied version of the passage and practice:—"Quod etiam nuncius qui ejus *baculum aut signum aliquid* portabat ab eo missum principes etiam et communis populus multo honore colebant et omnia præcepta ejus firmiter servabant."

In his note F to the above lines, at the end of the volume, the great poet brings his legendary lore in aid of his poetic painting. The cross was called in Gaelic *Creaw-Fareigh*, or the cross of shame, because disobedience to what the symbol implied inferred infamy: this idea is not farther removed from that implied in the Bavarian inscription above, *Gewrokt*, than cause from effect. He also appends a relation from Olaus Magnus, to the same purpose, and corroborative of those older ones I have adduced from Dusburg. More extended reading would have given Sir Walter stronger and better coincidences with his *Creaw-Fareigh* in the Danish *Budlafa* already noticed, and still stronger in the Swedish *Budstikke*, on the authority of John Stiernhook, "*De Jure Suev.*" (lib. i. b.):—"In priscis Sueoniæ legibus citatio per baculum. Hunc emittebant territorii quadrantibus et per manus vicinorum extraditus et facti notitiam simul et comparandi mandatum circumferet; quomodo non judicia tantum sed et promiscue omnes conventus publici indicati fuerunt ubi de casu aliquo extra ordinem deliberandum erat aut indicandum. Erat autem hic baculus nuntiatorius effectus ad modum rei de qua in conventu tractatio instituenda fuit, ut si res sacra, *crux lignea*; si homicidium, *ligneum telum aut securis.*"

More examples might be adduced; but if the above are insufficient, any addition could scarcely insure conviction, and must be wearisome to follow.

Sir Walter, in the same note, adduces instances of a comparatively recent and successful use of the fiery cross during the Scotch rebellion in 1745-6:—

"During the civil war of 1745-6, the fiery cross often made its circuit; and upon one occasion it passed through the whole district of Breadalbane, a tract of 32 miles, in three hours.

"The late Alexander Stuart, Esq., of Inverhaggle, described to me his having sent round the fiery cross through the district of Appine during the same commotion. The coast was threatened by a descent from two English frigates, and the flower of the young men were with the army of Prince Charles, then in England; the summons was so effectual, that even old age and children obeyed it; and a force was collected in a few days so numerous and enthusiastic, that all attempts of the intended diversion upon the coasts of the absent warriors was, in prudence, abandoned as desperate."

In continuance of these notices, the following passage, from a provincial newspaper of October, 1853, may be adduced, showing that the

memory of the fiery cross is not yet entirely extinguished in the minds of the warm-hearted Highlanders :—

“The other day, John M'Arthur, employed as a serviceman on the roads, while attired in full Highland costume, and *carrying a large fiery cross*—the emblem by which the clans in the days of other years were assembled—ran on the public road west from the east end of old Kilpatrick, a distance of three miles in eighteen minutes, in order to show the juveniles how telegraphing in the Highlands was performed long before the existence of steamboats, or rails, or common roads.”

It may also be allowed to remark that Leach, the popular illustrator of “Punch,” must have presumed upon a very general knowledge of the practice and custom when, during the commotion excited by the elevation of Archbishop Wiseman to the title of Eminence and the dignity of Cardinal, he is represented *in pontificalibus* hurrying with the fiery cross through the country.

Our further and final deductions regarding the ring more particularly under notice may be summed up as follows :— That it has been one of the solemn symbols of our Irish pontiff, and has been most probably sent round to summon his flock for convocations in peace ; for arming and assembling against the enemy or invader in time of war ; that the ring could be slid from one point to the other, and was used to indicate the anathema and imprecations which Scott has so forcibly set forth upon any recusant or clansman,

“ Who, summon'd to his chieftain's aid,
The signal saw, and disobeyed.”

The term *backslider* would be a curious verbal modern term and interpretation. We are justified in such interpretation of the swivel ring from the use still thus made of it in the long quotation above, from “The Antiquary ;” and the conclusion we arrive at may be fairly stated, that this ring bears impress of the vitality of British (Irish and Scotch) judicial customs, from their earliest Paganism, unaffected by the influences of Christianity, or a new and entirely opposite code of laws. Jurisprudence may change its precepts, a fresh view of duties and morals obtain, but customs and observances founded in nature are unchanging and permanent in the minds of a nation.

Mr. William Lawless, of Kilkenny, presented the following donation :—

A silver pectoral cross, of elaborate workmanship, composed of five crosses, connected together, and ornamented in the front with settings of uncut garnets and light-blue glass beads, surrounded with twisted wire, and twenty triangular pyramids, composed of small silver shot. The back, though much worn, retains traces of the crucifixion and evangelical emblems, wrought on a ground of niello. Portions of both front and back were originally gilt ; and from the remains of two pins, which extend from the rays of the central cross, it may be concluded that four beads were necessary to complete this part of the ornament. When per-

fect, this cross was an unusually rich specimen of the jeweller's art of the time. It was found at Callan, county of Kilkenny, and is noticed in the "Transactions of the Kilkenny Archæological Society," vol. iii., p. 412.

Mr. Lawless also presented a crucifix and reliquary of silver; a slender crucifix of silver; a collection of 32 amber, 32 jet, 13 variegated glass, 26 opaque, and 203 amber-coloured glass beads.

The thanks of the Academy were returned to the donor.

Catterson Smith, Esq., on the part of Mrs. Tottenham, of Rochfort, county of Westmeath, presented a choice collection of Irish antiquities, consisting of articles in bronze, bone, and wood—42 in number.

The marked thanks of the Academy were returned to Mrs. Tottenham; as also to Mr. Smith, at whose suggestion the gift was made.

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 1863.

THE VERY REV. CHARLES GRAVES, D.D., President, in the Chair.

Christopher Coppinger, Esq., Q. C.; Patrick W. Joyce, Esq.; Thomas Richardson, M. D., and Captain Meadows Taylor, were duly elected members of the Academy.

The VERY REV. the PRESIDENT read a paper on—

SOME NOTICES OF THE ACTS OF ST. PATRICK, CONTAINED IN THE BOOK OF ARMAGH.

THE conclusions which Dr. Graves endeavours to establish in this paper are the following:—

I. That Muirchu Maccumachteni, the author of the Life of St. Patrick, with which the "Book of Armagh" commences, was the son of Cogitosus.

This conclusion is founded (1) on a necessary and certain emendation of the text in the prologue of Muirchu's Life of St. Patrick. The prologue stands thus in the manuscript:—

"Quoniam quidem, mi domine Aido, multi conati sunt ordinare narrationem utique istam, secundum quod patres eorum et qui ministri ab initio fuerunt sermonis tradiderunt illis, sed propter difficillimum narrationis opus, diversasque opiniones, et plurimorum plurimas suspiciones, nunquam ad unum certumque historiæ tramitem pervenerunt; ideo, ni fallor, juxta hoc nostrorum proverbium, ut deducuntur pueri in amphitheatrum, in hoc *periculosum et profundum narrationis sanctæ pelagus*, turgentibus proterve gurgitum aggeribus, inter acutissimos Charybdes, per ignota æquora insitos, a nullis adhuc lintribus excepto tantum uno patris mei cognito si expertum atque occupatum, *ingenioli mei* puerilem